

June 22, 1983, p. 2

students at the school recognize me now and it was very pleasant to be recognized by the students. The school secretary, Ann Marie Wilbur, recognized John; she also asked about Richard Bubernick, who apparently was one of her buddies when he was at Fell. The photographing session in the gym was very easy and pleasant. The students were absolute dears: very enthusiastic and responsive. John took one of the group photographs. The students were calling us "the photographers" and that pleased John a great deal. Page after page, I speak of John. I do because he is my best friend, and I am more than twice his age. I imagine that he would probably refer to me as his best friend also. It's a very nice and easy relationship. We are both interested in the same things, above all in the Gravity Railroad. We are both, at the same time, completely (perhaps "largely" would be a better word than "completely") unlike our peers. Most of our peers are not at all interested in any of the things that we are. One of the things that I am very consciously working on with John (unknown to John) is developing his self-confidence. Perhaps the confidence comes with age. I am sure that it is easier to be 39 and interested in local history than it is to be 17 and interested in local history. He strode around the Fell school this afternoon with a good deal of confidence. The kids at the school regarded us as they would movie stars or astronauts or well-known athletes. It felt good, I must say. I'm sure John enjoyed the adulation of the students. It is most interesting how John and I help each other out. John, for example, could never walk around town alone watering the flowers in the boxes. He can do it with me, however. At the same time, I could not do <sup>alone</sup> all that I do for the historical society and for the city of Carbondale. If John were not involved with the historical society. Not because he always helps me do what I do, rather because he is so interested in local history. In many respects, I believe I am attempting to train John to be my successor. It is perhaps difficult for John -- as it would be for any teenager -- to be